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Natural occurrence of chronic plague in rats.—The characteristic feature of chronic rat plague is described as being the presence of circumscribed abscesses containing plague bacilli in rats caught alive, the animals usually showing no other lesions nor signs of ill health. No bacilli were seen on microscopical examination of the heart blood and of the spleen tissue in any of the rats. The bacilli in the great majority of the cases were virulent. Forty-five rats conforming to this description which were found during the year's investigation reported in 1907 in the Punjab were grouped into two classes, one group including those in which the lesions were situated in the abdominal viscera, and the other group including those in which the abscesses were found in regions occupied by peripheral lymphatic glands. Lesions of the viscera were found principally in the spleen and in the mesentery, while the submaxillary group were most frequently affected among the lymphatic glands. The peripheral type was observed chiefly during the decline of the epizootic, while the visceral type predominated in the offseason. In Bombay only one chronic plague rat was met with out of 17,000 plague-infected rats. In Kasel 9 per cent of all the rats which were proved plague infected had the chronic disease, while in Dhand the proportion was as high as 28 per cent. In the present state of knowledge the committee declare themselves unable to advance any adequate explanation of these facts. No direct evidence was found that chronic plague, as it occurs in the Punjab villages, possesses any significance in the seasonal recurrence among the rats of the infection in an acute form, nor was any evidence available which excludes this possibility.

Man as a host of the Indian rat flea.—It is shown that in the laboratory the rat flea, *Pulex cheopis*, will readily bite man. When very numerous it will bite man even in the presence of its natural host. The committee were able to keep this species of flea alive for more than three weeks by feeding it on man alone. In the course of some experiments in go-downs which were infested with *Pulex cheopis* alone, fleas in considerable numbers were often caught on the legs of men who had entered the go-downs for a short time. In a building in Bombay in which there had been a severe rat mortality, proved to be due to plague, rat fleas in large numbers were caught on the legs of men who entered some of the rooms in the building for a short time.

It is concluded, therefore, that the rat flea, *Pulex cheopis*, under certain circumstances, is attracted by man, and will readily bite and feed on him.

UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Reports from San Francisco, Cal.—Status of plague—Plague-prevention work.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue reports:

December 4. One new case of plague to-day, a Russian. Total cases of plague to date, 110; deaths to date, 65.

December 5. Two cases of plague, a Californian who died December 2 and a German who died December 3, were confirmed by bacteriological examination to-day. Total cases of plague to date, 112; deaths to date, 67.

Doctor Blue further reports plague-prevention work at San Francisco carried out during the week ended November 30:

Sick inspected	75
Plague cases found	7
Dead inspected	61
Plague, among dead inspected	1
Premises inspected	4,988
Houses disinfected	58
Houses destroyed	20
Nuisances abated	452
Rats found dead	561
Rats trapped	1,911
Bounty rats received	75
Poisons placed	249,757
Rats examined bacteriologically	811
Rats infected with bacillus pestis	1
Contacts inspected	34

Outgoing quarantine transactions.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Hobdy reports, November 25:

Week ended November 23. Ninety-four vessels were fumigated and certified to during the week, and 40 vessels, previously fumigated, were certified to. Investigations along the water front show that there is considerable diminution in the number of rats present and a still more marked decrease in the number of sick or dead rats seen. The infection is still generally distributed, but the percentage is very much lower than was first reported. Of the dead rats that are found, many were proved to have died from the results of the rat crusade now being waged, as their autopsies show death to have been due to the various poisons employed for their destruction, and particularly to phosphorus.

Observations during the week indicate that the number of rats found on board is being steadily reduced.

Report from Seattle, Wash.—Plague-prevention work.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Cofer reports, December 2:

Week ended November 30.

Sick inspected	3
City blocks inspected and reported upon	207
Nuisances abated	135
Cubic yards of rubbish burned	105
Cubic yards of rubbish removed	304
Rats delivered and cremated	2,540
Rats examined bacteriologically	49
Pieces of rat poison placed	176,000
Vessels disinfected	6